**Scarcity of seeds in Punjab**

346. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to colossal damage to crops in Punjab due to recent rains and floods, the scarcity of seeds for the coming rabi crops and next year's kharif looms large over the farmers;

(b) whether the future food production prospects in Punjab have been threatened due to recent rains and scarcity of seeds; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction in this regard and what further steps propose to take to make the availability of seeds to farmers in Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Following the unexpected recent floods in Punjab, local shortages of wheat seeds for rabi 1988-89 have been reported.

(b) No precise assessment is available of the likely loss in foodgrain production because of the floods. The kharif foodgrain production target, however, is likely to be achieved.

(c) The Punjab Government is making arrangements to procure 7 lakh quintals of germination-tested good quality wheat from its own Food Department, State Civil Supplies Corporation and Marketing Federation for supply to the farmers to be used as seeds.

**Pest menace to cotton crop in Punjab**

347. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cotton crop in Punjab is facing a serious pest menace in the wake of bountiful monsoon rainfall during the season;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to send a team of experts from ICAR to save cotton crop in Punjab; and

(c) if so, by when; and if not, what other steps Government propose to take to save the cotton crop facing serious pest menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) The overall pest situation on current cotton crop in Punjab remained at a low ebb. However, at some places, moderate intensity of pest attack has occured, requiring pest control measures particularly in the districts of Ferozepur, Faridkot and Bhatinda.

(b) There is no proposal for sending a team of experts at present.

(c) The Government is ensuring regular pest and disease surveillance on cotton crop for advising timely plant protection measures.

Pesticides availability has also been ensured to enable the cotton growers to undertake plant protection measures against pest attack.

**Damage due to floods in Punjab**

348. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to recent floods, Punjab State has been affected badly;

(b) whether a Central Team also visited Punjab to assess the loss of lives and properties; and

(c) if so, the details of the assistance provided by the Central Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Ceiling on expenditure will be approved in accordance with the established procedure on receipt of the report of the Central Team.

**Unemployment Allowance**

349. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is persistant demand to provide unemployment allowance to the jobless in the country;

(b) if so, whether several State Governments have also urged Central Government to examine the possibility of providing unemployment allowance to the jobless; and

(c) what is the reaction of the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) to (c) The demands for providing unemployment allowance to the jobless in the country have often been received from various quarters, including a few State Governments. The Central Government has examined this and is not in favour of payment of unemployment allowance to any category of the unemployed. Such a step has very large financial implications. The Government feels that resources of such a massive magnitude should be utilised on schemes which generate productive and enduring employment opportunities rather than be frittered away either on schemes which create unproductive work or on payment of doles to the unemployed, particularly at the present stage of development of our economy which calls for optimum utilisation of limited resources available.

**Criticism of Agricultural Research in the Country**

350. SHRI D.B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farm experts have sharply criticised country's agricultural research system;

(b) whether in the field of farm research any satisfactory progress has been achieved by the scientists; and

(c) if so, the details thereof; and further steps Government propose to take to boost the agricultural research in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARI KRISHNA SHASTRI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir, Modern agriculture technology developed by the scientists has helped in increasing the agricultural productivity substantially. During the last four decades, productivity increase in foodgrains was from 6.4 to 11.8q/ha, in mustard from 4 to 7 q/ha, in cotton from 0.95 to 1.93 q/ha, (lint) in sugarcane from 342 to 599 q/ha, in potato from 66 to 126 q/ha and in tobacco from 7.7 to 10.9 q/ha. Also egg and milk production increased from 10.0 to 16.9 billions and from 31.6 to 45.9m. tonnes, respectively during the period 1980-81 to 1987-88.

(c) The foreign expertise has been sought wherever required.